

National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska

Public Hearings

Fairbanks

1998

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NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE - ALASKA

FAIRBANKS HEARING

Carlson Center
Conference Room
2010 Second Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska

January 22, 1998, 3:00 & 7:00 p.m.

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PUBLIC TESTIMONY (CONTINUED)

EVENING SESSION

1 Your comments on the ANILCA Section 810 subsistence evaluation
2 can tell us whether we have correctly identified and assessed
3 the effects of the various alternatives in the Draft EIS on
4 subsistence uses and needs. Your comments can tell us whether
5 or not other lands are available for the management schemes
6 proposed and you can suggest other alternatives which would
7 reduce or eliminate effects on public lands needed for
8 subsistence purposes. You can also tell us if the proposed
9 findings in the Draft EIS are accurate and whether we have left
10 anything out of our subsistence evaluation.

11 You can point out information about the resources or
12 uses of the planning area which our draft document may have
13 overlooked or not analyzed correctly; we want to be sure to
14 have all the relevant information before we make a decision.
15 Also, you can provide us a sense of what the public wants to
16 occur on these lands. Decision-makers want to know where the
17 public stands on the issues involved in the future management
18 of this part of the NPR-A.

19 The Draft EIS was placed on the Internet on November
20 24th and paper copies were released to the public the first
21 week of December. Several public information meetings were
22 held in Alaska during December to answer questions about the
23 document and to promote dissemination of the Draft EIS.

24 This hearing is one of a series being conducted in the
25 Alaskan communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Barrow,

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1 Nuiqsut, Wainwright, Anchorage and Fairbanks here today.
2 Hearings in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, California are
3 also being held to ensure a full opportunity for the public to
4 participate.

5 In addition to these hearings, comments on the Draft
6 EIS have been accepted by the Bureau since December 12th, 1997,
7 the start of the official comment period and will continue to
8 be accepted if postmarked by March 12th, 1998. And please note
9 that this is an extended comment period. Comments may be
10 provided orally at these hearings, in writing via the Internet,
11 by facsimile, or by regular mail. Informational materials with
12 phone numbers, and addresses, including the Internet address,
13 as well as blank forms for comments are provided on the table
14 at the back of the hearing room.

15 All comments provided will be compiled, analyzed and
16 considered by the Bureau in preparing the Final Environmental
17 Impact Statement, due to be released in late June 1998.

18 The way we will proceed is I will call the names of
19 those who have indicated they wish to make oral comments to
20 come up to the microphone. You will then state your name,
21 state the organization you represent, if any, and then give
22 your comments. If you have written comments, I will ask you to
23 provide them to the person at the table by the front door and
24 they will be included as part of the record of this hearing.

25 I see by the request forms that we have about 17 people

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1 signed up so far to speak. Based on that and our time limits,
2 I will ask each speaker to confine him or herself to five
3 minutes. If you reach the time limit, I will ask you for a
4 summary of your comments and then request that you step down to
5 let others speak. When we complete the list of people wishing
6 to speak and if time allows, I may offer others the opportunity
7 to speak.

8 I and the BLM personnel here today are here to listen.
9 We are not here to answer questions. However, individuals are
10 available following the hearing and this evening at the open
11 house should you need to have some questions answered at that
12 time. I would request that the audience be considerate of the
13 speaker and give him or her the courtesy of your attention. We
14 will begin now with the first person who requested to speak,
15 and that is -- I believe it's Mr. Sean McGuire.

16 MR. MCGUIRE: Thank you for the opportunity to speak
17 here today. My name is Sean McGuire. I -- my address is 351
18 Cloudberry Drive, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709. I guess the first
19 impression I have of this whole National Petroleum Reserve is I
20 really -- I don't understand why this thing's being pushed --
21 it seems -- it appears that it's being pushed very quickly.
22 And if you look out there right now, the world is awash in oil.
23 Oil prices are literally on an all-time one of the all-time
24 lows. It's just about ready to go below \$14.00 here. I just
25 don't see -- I mean this is the National Petroleum Reserve. It

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1 was set aside for the nation in a -- you know, basically in a
2 time of need, as it was a conservation measure. And I just
3 find it a little odd that at this point there seems to be such
4 a great need to get in there. It strikes me that that thing is
5 being pushed. I don't think the American people are -- would
6 feel that this is a time of great need that this thing needs to
7 be opened up. I would hope that this whole process maybe is
8 slowed down a little bit.

9 I talked to a lot of people and there's a feeling out
10 there that some kind of deal has been made. No one knows
11 exactly what it is, but just the appearance of this thing on a
12 fast track with the global oil situation, it doesn't add up.

13 And then I guess secondly, if this area is to be opened
14 up to drilling, I would hope that the special places in the
15 National Petroleum Reserve, areas that are really unique like
16 Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River, it would just would seem
17 -- I would be very disappointed if drilling was allowed in
18 those areas. It just doesn't seem necessary, especially now
19 with the technology that is out there. It doesn't seem that
20 there would need to drill right in these environmentally
21 sensitive areas. So I hope that some of these areas can be
22 protected and put into some very strong protective status.

23 Finally, I guess I'll close by saying when you look out
24 worldwide and you look at a nation, the nations that take care
25 of their natural wonders are considered to be very civilized

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1 nations. Nations that destroy their natural habitat are
2 considered to be very uncivilized and very backward. I think
3 if you look historically at this country, I don't think there
4 is one area in the entire United States that's been set aside
5 for its natural values, either in parks, reserves, for
6 recreation, hunting, fishing, trapping that people look back
7 and say, man, I wish we would would've opened that up. I wish
8 they'd of -- I wish they'd have developed that.

9 I think it's really crucial that we take the long view
10 with these special areas within the Petroleum Reserve if it is
11 to be opened. I hope there is consideration for these special
12 environmental areas. So thank you.

13 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. McGuire. Next I have
14 Marty Rutherford.

15 COMMISSIONER RUTHERFORD: Good afternoon. On behalf of
16 Governor Tony Knowles, I appreciate this opportunity to present
17 the State of Alaska's views on the National Petroleum Reserve
18 in Alaska Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. I am
19 Marty Rutherford, Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department
20 of Natural Resources.

21 The Knowles Administration strongly believes that the
22 oil beneath the National Petroleum Reserve can be developed in
23 a responsible way that not only provides jobs and fuel for
24 Alaskan families, but also protects the environment and the
25 wildlife that depends upon it. The State of Alaska is

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1 committed to the protection of fish, wildlife, and subsistence
2 values in the Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River corridor. The
3 State believes that any lease sale in the NPR-A should be
4 designed to protect the particular important fish and wildlife
5 resources upon which local communities depend for their
6 traditional subsistence needs. The State will be making
7 recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior on how this
8 can be accomplished through the EIS and lease sale processes.

9 In developing these recommendations, the State is
10 working closely with the North Slope Borough and the Bureau of
11 Land Management. Governor Knowles has adopted a policy of
12 Doing it Right, which holds that resource development must be
13 done right or not at all. Doing it Right is a comprehensive
14 approach to managing our resources so they can be used,
15 enjoyed, and sustained for present and future generations. It
16 means partnering with and challenging industry, the impacted
17 communities and citizens as stewards to ensure protection of
18 our air, water, wildlife, and habitat. It's based on three
19 principles; sound science, prudent management, and responsive
20 and meaningful public involvement.

21 Sound science is using the latest and best scientific
22 information about the resources, including the best
23 technologies and local knowledge.

24 Prudent management means focusing on conservation and
25 sustainability, utilizing Alaska contractors and workers, and

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1 utilizing field and operations monitoring to assure quality
2 information and management.

3 Responsive meaningful public involvement includes
4 involving the stakeholders, the affected communities and
5 citizens in an ongoing public review.

6 For development to take place, the Knowles
7 Administration believes it must follow these principles. Based
8 on the State's understanding of the planning area and our
9 participation in the development of the NPR-A Plan and
10 Environmental Impact Statement, we have concluded that the
11 opportunity does exist to protect the outstanding wildlife and
12 habitat in the area while exploring and extracting the vital
13 energy resources that we believe exist there.

14 On the North Slope, the State has used the Doing it
15 Right motto for oil and gas development with great success. In
16 the 1980s there were four lease sales held within the NPR-A,
17 noting I might add about -- we netted about over \$70,000,000
18 and resulting in over 115 wells being drilled. Since that time
19 great technical strides have been made. The Alpine and Badami
20 projects which are currently under way illustrate the
21 advancements that have significantly reduced the environmental
22 impact of oil exploration and development through much smaller
23 production footprints on the landscape.

24 The State has a proven and successful track record of
25 minimizing and mitigating environmental impacts related to the

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1 development of our energy resources. As many of you know,
2 these management techniques include directional or also called
3 extended reach drilling of up to four miles,
4 re-injection of drilling wastes, limited -- limiting
5 explorations to the winter months, maximizing the use of ice
6 roads, identifying, protecting and monitoring the important
7 habitat areas and wildlife migration corridors, reducing the
8 size of the drilling pads, and improving our drilling
9 efficiency through advanced seismic data. I might note that
10 Governor Knowles and Secretary Babbitt had an opportunity to
11 observe, and they commented favorably about many of these
12 management techniques during their trip to the North Slope this
13 last summer.

14 An integral part of the State's management philosophy
15 derives from our abiding respect for the land, the wildlife,
16 and the people who rely upon them. Alaskans have a rich
17 history of being good stewards of our land and resources. In
18 Alaska's oil fields, industry is not only required to use the
19 best available technology, but must also comply with very
20 rigorous lease stipulations and protections.

21 Oil and gas production conducted with care for the
22 environment and wildlife in the NPR-A can yield great benefits
23 for Alaskans. New good paying, family supporting jobs are
24 important to Alaska's families and the communities they live
25 in. Leasing in the NPR-A will provide those jobs in Alaska,

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1 and the Knowles Administration is committing -- committed to
2 making sure that Alaskans are hired for these jobs.

3 The Administration is also committed to no decline
4 after 1999 to the flow through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, which
5 ensures a stable and consistent economy. And leasing in the
6 NPR-A will help to maintain that oil flow. New oil production
7 in the NPR-A will also provide the State with millions of
8 dollars of new revenues. That means for the Alaska Permanent
9 Fund, which means healthy dividends in the future. And it also
10 means funding for critical state services like education,
11 public safety and road maintenance.

12 The Knowles Administration is confident that we can
13 identify areas within the NPR-A for oil and gas leasing while
14 ensuring protection of critical fish, wildlife, and subsistence
15 use areas. The State appreciates the Bureau of Land
16 Management's efforts to establish appropriate land management
17 for the Northeast Portion of the National Petroleum Reserve in
18 Alaska. And I thank you for the opportunity to provide
19 comments today on behalf of the Knowles administration.

20 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Rutherford. Next I have
21 Andy Keller.

22 MR. KELLER: My name is Andy Keller. I currently live
23 in Haines, Alaska. My boyhood years were spent in the sloughs,
24 hardwood forests, and the prairies of the great white states.
25 It was here that I marveled at the turtles, snakes, frogs and

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1 other life of the region. While I did play football with the
2 boys in the neighborhood, my most memorable times were
3 exclaiming to my brother, Larry, it's a two-hander. A two-
4 hander is a big Wisconsin bullfrog or an Illinois snapping
5 turtle as big as the kitchen sink. Or coming home to my mom
6 after summer camp with a milk carton full of frogs -- frog
7 eggs. As a university student, I designed a wilderness studies
8 course. As part of the program, I located natural areas in all
9 parts of the U.S.A. I journeyed across the country and had the
10 opportunity to explore, study, and later work in many of the
11 natural areas. I have lived and worked in 11 national parks,
12 for instance. What I found was that the last fragments of a
13 once vast wilderness heritage were rapidly disappearing. Every
14 day -- even today, millions of acres of wilderness are being
15 destroyed annually. One biological unit in particular, the
16 prairie, was conspicuously absent in the national park and
17 national wilderness preservation systems.

18 America is still emerging from its frontier past. In
19 fact, the frontier is so close that we can almost hear the
20 rumble of the wagon trains heading west. Mid-western October
21 skies full of migrating waterfowl trigger memories of a time
22 when the land was full of bison and the expansive prairies
23 extended in all directions. Symbols of the frontier filled the
24 bars, barns, restaurants, and homes of this country. From old
25 wagon wheels in suburban Washington, D.C. yards to plows in the

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1 Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska, the symbols are everywhere.
2 American westerns and the frontier that they represent are a
3 global icon. Almost 10 years ago, a twin Otter carried.....
4 MS. FOX: Mr. Keller?
5 MR. KELLER: Excuse me.
6 MS. FOX: Would you back off the microphone a little
7 bit?
8 MR. KELLER: Is that good?
9 MS. FOX: Yeah, that's fine.
10 MR. KELLER: Okay.
11 MS. FOX: Thank you.
12 MR. KELLER: Thank you. Almost 10 years ago, a twin
13 Otter carried me over the crest of the Brooks Range. Under the
14 fresh made snow in the coastal plain of the Arctic National
15 Wildlife Refuge, it looked like my concept of the North Pole.
16 In the months to follow, I would watch this land come alive.
17 The huge bison herds of the past have disappeared. But on June
18 10th, 1988, I watched 100,000 caribou move across the coastal
19 plain.
20 Several years later I was back in Washington working to
21 defeat an energy bill which contained a provision which would
22 mandate oil leasing and drilling in the Arctic National
23 Wildlife Refuge coastal plain. A retired Nebraska woman told
24 me how she had read in her mother's journals about the bison
25 herds on the prairie grasses. She grew quite emotional as she

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1 described her feelings about the prairie. I was calling to ask
2 her if she would write a letter to her senators. She already
3 had, along with most of the neighborhood, the Sunday evening
4 church woman's coffee cake group and so on. She told me that
5 she was counting on me to represent her in Washington D.C.
6 Over the years, many people have said things like that to me.
7 I know that I speak for them.

8 Now it is 1998. My grandmother, born as the frontier
9 closed in the West, would not believe how things are today.
10 Fires burn across Asian islands as the tropical rain forests
11 are destroyed. There are discussions of climate change, and
12 scientists raise concerns about the health of the oceans. We
13 in this country certainly are not justified in pointing the
14 finger elsewhere. There is plenty of responsibility to be
15 taken here.

16 So now we debate the future of the largest remaining
17 tract of roadless land left in the United States. The National
18 Petroleum Reserve - Alaska was established 75 years ago to
19 provide for the energy needs of the nation in times of national
20 emergency. What is the national emergency that would warrant
21 industrializing this area in 1998? I do not see it.

22 In the 1960s and '70s, the oil industry writer
23 proclaimed that energy and national security needs mandate the
24 construction of a pipeline across Alaska. The pipeline was
25 built, and in 1980 Congress passed the Alaska National Interest

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1 Lands Conservation Act, ANILCA. This bill placed over 100
2 million acres of Alaska into various degrees of protective
3 status. While this bill was a step in the right direction in
4 many respects, it failed to protect the coastal plain in Arctic
5 Alaska, a region similar to our prairies in the American west.

6 In 1995, with scarcely a stir, Congress lifted the ban
7 on exporting Alaskan oil. This ban had been in place for 22
8 years. It is simply arrogant to assume that we have the wisdom
9 to leave no decision to those who will follow us. Thanks to
10 some of the people in this room and to many whose lives have
11 passed, this freckled-faced Scotch-Irish boy was able to
12 experience the promise of wilderness in the Arctic Refuge.

13 While listening to frog calls with a 93-year old
14 naturalist last spring, my senior friend told me how much
15 reduced the frog population is from when he was a boy.
16 Wilderness is a place to let things change with minimal human
17 interference. I refer to the close of the western frontier of
18 the last century, but changes in the Arctic frontier belong to
19 our time. I made illusion to world events elsewhere, but the
20 Arctic coastal plain is our country. I talked about the future
21 which will rise out of our brief moment of decision.

22 My request today is that we leave the energy resources
23 in the ground for the next generation. They may decide that
24 they need them. The export ban should be reinstated before
25 anyone is allowed to talk about energy or national security

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1 with a straight face. Since we have already committed millions
2 of acres of North Slope to industrialization, the nation must
3 now commit millions of acres of the North Slope to conservation
4 purposes. Picture a scale with two sides. It is time for the
5 scales to be balanced.

6 MS. FOX: Mr. Keller, could I ask you to summarize your
7 comments.

8 MR. KELLER: I am. I will do that now. Thank you.

9 MS. FOX: Thank you.

10 MR. KELLER: To balance the scales -- I'm sorry about
11 that.

12 MS. FOX: That's okay.

13 MR. KELLER: To balance the scales, I suggest that,
14 one, Congress designate the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
15 1002 area as wilderness. Two, that BLM place the 1.7 million
16 acre Teshekpuk Lake and the 2.3 million acre Colville River
17 Special Management Areas in permanent protective status. Both
18 areas should be recommended for addition in the National
19 Wilderness Preservation System. Eventually these and other
20 critical areas should be added to the National Wildlife Refuge
21 System. John Cyberling (ph), a former member of Congress from
22 Ohio, and the Chair of the Interior Subcommittee on Alaska
23 Lands and Oversight during the ANILCA debate recommended a 22.5
24 million acre Teshekpuk/Utukok National Wildlife Refuge be
25 established within the boundaries of the current Petroleum

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1 Reserve. It is time to re-examine his proposal.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony
3 today.

4 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Keller. Next is Dave Klein.

5 MR. KLEIN: My name is Dave Klein. I am retired
6 recently as senior scientist for the Alaska Fish and Wildlife
7 Research Unit. And I am currently married to a professor with
8 the Institute of Arctic Biology in the Department of Biology
9 and Wildlife at the University. But my comments are those of
10 my own -- myself and don't represent those of the University
11 necessarily.

12 First of all, I appreciate the opportunity to make some
13 comments here. Most of my experience has been in Alaska. My
14 research experience has been with the large hoof mammals, and
15 primarily, I guess, in recent years, with caribou and musk-oxen
16 in Arctic Alaska. The National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska is
17 known among biologists who work throughout the Arctic to be one
18 of the most productive wildlife areas in the Arctic. The
19 Western Arctic herd, for example, it -- the numbering's
20 slightly less than half a million animals, is one of three
21 large herds throughout the whole Arctic that are of that -- of
22 comparable size. One in Northern Quebec and also one in the
23 Timere (ph) region of Siberia. We know about the
24 Teshekpuk Lake herd, which has expanded in numbers recently and
25 is very important for subsistence uses. Bear and brown

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1 grizzlies are known to be in a higher density in the National
2 Petroleum Reserve than areas to the east in North America.
3 Wolverines, which were studied extensively in that area by
4 Dr. Audrey McGown (ph) were shown to be also of a higher
5 density than was expected in the Arctic and one of the highest
6 density areas of wolverines in North America. Now, these are
7 just a few examples of the importance of this region and its
8 productivity. Others could include the moose on the Colville
9 River, peregrine falcons on the Colville River and waterfowl
10 and shore birds and their use in the Teshekpuk Lake area.

11 Currently I'm working on a research project with a
12 graduate student of mine to develop a habitat map for musk-oxen
13 in northern Alaska. Now, I'm sure you're aware that musk-oxen
14 were extricated before the turn of the last century and then
15 re-established starting in the 1960s in the Alaskan Arctic.
16 The populations are increasing in number and they're expanding,
17 yet we have no historical record of the kinds of habitats that
18 they occupy throughout that area prior -- when they were there
19 previously. So we've done studies more recently in the eastern
20 part -- northeastern part of the Alaskan Arctic which give us
21 some idea of the kind of habitats musk-oxen are using, but we
22 have no good data to project how they might expand and where
23 they may occur. We know that they have spotty distribution.
24 And this habitat map is using -- we'll develop it using
25 geographical information system data and the computerized maps

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1 that will be generated as a result of it. The funding is
2 coming from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the
3 Bureau of Land Management. We're collaborating with the
4 National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the
5 Wildlife Management Department of the North Slope Borough. We
6 expect to have this completed, the first draft of this map, by
7 December of this year. This map would be valuable in use in
8 assessing habitats of importance within the National Petroleum
9 Reserve - Alaska for musk-oxen, and is of interest to all of
10 these land management agencies that control that area as well
11 as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

12 I guess what I want to emphasize, in conclusion, is the
13 complexity of the ecological relationships that exists between
14 wildlife species and the plant and other animals in the region.
15 And an example, of course, is the caribou, the Central Arctic
16 Herd. And it's now 30 years since oil was discovered at
17 Prudhoe Bay. It's only recently in the last few years that
18 we're aware that the caribou in the Central Arctic Herd are
19 suffering from oil development and lower productivity and lower
20 calf production, partly through displacement from their
21 traditional calving areas, but more importantly, limitations on
22 their free movement to insect (sic) relief areas during
23 summertime.

24 I think it's important that we have better knowledge
25 than currently exists. Even though I think BLM and Fish and

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1 Game -- Alaska Department of Fish and Game and other agencies
2 have done some excellent work in providing information for the
3 EIS, there's still much more that needs to be known before we
4 can make a good judgement as to how to proceed and what
5 trade-offs might be involved. I think a good model for this is
6 the model that Congress developed for the coastal plain of the
7 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge providing a period of five
8 years for both environmental studies as well as assessment of
9 the energy resources, the geophysical studies as well that were
10 carried out so that the American public and Congress would be
11 in a position to know what trade-offs might be made if oil was
12 to be explored for and developed. And I think that kind of
13 information is needed by the American public. And I don't
14 think there's an adequate basis at this time to make that kind
15 of a judgment. And that kind of information, if it's available
16 and exploration is to proceed, would allow for a much more
17 sensitive exploration with a much greater, much greater,
18 reduction in impact on the fish and wildlife resources of the
19 region.

20 So I thank you very much for the chance to say a few
21 words.

22 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Klein. Sara Callaghan.

23 MS. CALLAGHAN: Hi. My name is Sara Callaghan. Thank
24 you for this opportunity to testify. I'm here as a
25 representative for the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.

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1 The Northern Center is a regional conservation organization
2 which is dedicated to the protection of Interior and Arctic
3 Alaskan and represents 1,300 members in Alaska and nationwide.

4 At over 23 million acres, the National Petroleum
5 Reserve in Alaska's Western Arctic contains the calving grounds
6 and summer range for the 450,000 member Western Arctic Caribou
7 Herd and the 25,000 member Teshekpuk herd; high densities of
8 peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons, and rough-legged hawks, and
9 wetlands visited by over five million waterfowl and shorebirds.
10 At least 90 species of birds return to the reserve year after
11 year to feed, molt, and raise their young.

12 When the reserve was established in 1923, it was
13 intended to be tapped only at a time of pressing national need.
14 In the next five years, however, BP and ARCO plan to drill a
15 thousand new wells in Alaska, and the State estimates that
16 seven billion more barrels of oil may be pumped from known
17 fields by the year 2015. And while politicians and oil
18 companies argue that the nation needs this oil, millions of
19 barrels are being shipped to Asia. Oil prices have fallen
20 sharply. Automobile fuel efficiency is declining. And the oil
21 industry predicts Central Arctic production to actually
22 increase in the next five years. There is no compelling reason
23 to lease any part of the Western Arctic for oil drilling at any
24 time.

25 Development has sprawled across two million acres, over

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1 3,000 square miles, in the Central Arctic since oil was
2 discovered at Prudhoe Bay in 1968. This is a far cry from
3 industry's claim that their footprint is minimal. And yet
4 there has never been a cumulative assessment of this
5 disturbance and pollution from this vast industrial complex
6 expanding across America's Arctic. The impact of existing and
7 already planned oil drilling must be assessed before this
8 nation's citizens can adequately consider any new proposals to
9 expand oil drilling east or west into federal lands.

10 Of the five alternatives in BLM's Draft EIS, none
11 address the rapid expansion of oil drilling east and west
12 across the Arctic and the danger this poses to wilderness,
13 wildlife and traditional ways of life.

14 Before more oil drilling can be allowed to sprawl
15 further across the Arctic, Alaskans and citizens across the
16 nation are calling for serious attention to the need for a
17 coherent national energy policy to plan for the needs of
18 current and future generations. There is not time for further
19 delay. Our leaders should advance a national energy policy to
20 address concerns about global climate change and our dependence
21 on non-renewable fossil fuels.

22 The Draft EIS gives an inadequate picture of Arctic
23 development and downplays existing oil field development in the
24 Arctic. For example, the Draft mentions only 141 miles of
25 existing pipeline when, in fact, there are approximately 1,100

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1 miles of pipeline. This is almost 10 times the published
2 estimate. In addition, currently proposed oil fields
3 development onshore and offshore are not considered in what's
4 called the cumulative case of the EIS. Although the EIS
5 mentions projects such as Badami and Alpine, it does not
6 discuss the probable impacts of Liberty or the Northstar
7 development projects. By ignoring proposed development
8 projects, this EIS continues the incremental approach to
9 development decisions in Alaska's Arctic.

10 We are concerned that the federal government has not
11 given the public a clear idea which is -- of what's planned for
12 Alaska's Arctic. This Draft EIS fails to put forward a
13 proposed action and instead suggests that new alternatives need
14 to be developed as a consequence of these meetings and the
15 written comments. Thus, due to the fast-track nature of the
16 planning process, the public will never have a opportunity to
17 comment on the agency's actual proposal. We recommend that
18 after the BLM has developed a proposed action, the document
19 should go out for a second public comment period, and that the
20 comments from the second period should guide and figure
21 strongly in the federal government's final decision.

22 More than half of the written comments BLM received
23 during the scoping phase last spring supported the values of
24 the reserve for wilderness, wildlife population, and
25 traditional ways of life and asked that BLM protect special

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1 areas within the planning area. And yet, the Draft EIS fails
2 to even consider permanent protection for these natural values.

3 The Northern Center, therefore, is unable to support
4 any of the five development alternatives proposed in the Draft
5 EIS. Instead, we recommend that BLM develop a balanced
6 conservation alternative which includes permanent protection
7 for two critical areas.

8 The entire 4.6 million acre planning area qualifies for
9 wilderness designation. At the very least, however, the EIS
10 should recommend that Congress grant permanent wilderness
11 protection to the Colville River and Teshekpuk Lake Special
12 Management Area as outlined in the 1977 designation, and that
13 these areas be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
14 Service for safekeeping.

15 In the Draft EIS, pipelines would be allowed to cross
16 the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area in all leasing alternatives,
17 placing this internationally significant natural habitat at
18 great risk. Pipelines bring pollution and disturbance from
19 construction activities and oil spills, both chronic and major.
20 If there were no roads along the pipeline, summer response
21 would be by helicopter, which is extremely disturbing for the
22 sensitive molting geese, and frequent plane flights would be
23 needed for leak surveillance.

24 The Teshekpuk Lake Special Management Area and the
25 Colville River Special Management Area should be permanently

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1 protected as wilderness and management should be transferred to
2 the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas should be
3 protected from oil leasing and any surface development such as
4 roads, pipelines and gravel mines, which should be prohibited
5 in order to preserve traditional hunting and fishing
6 opportunities as well as critical wildlife habitat.

7 Thank you for this opportunity to represent our members
8 at the public forum. We look forward to reviewing the Final
9 EIS in its revised form. And I'll provide a copy of these
10 comments.

11 MS. FOX: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Callaghan.
12 Next I have Tonya Schlentner.

13 MS. SCHLENTNER: I'd like to thank you for this
14 opportunity. And my name is Tonya Schlentner, and I was born
15 and raised here in Alaska. And my favorite way of life was
16 when I got to live a subsistence lifestyle. And you can see
17 I'm very young myself, and I also hope that a subsistence way
18 of life, living with the animals, will also be around for the
19 next generation. And also, my preferred way of travel, which I
20 continue, is dog-mushing, which of course, doesn't need any oil
21 except for, of course, if we take our dogs in the truck.

22 Anyways, my view is that I don't think any new drilling
23 should be done in the -- in as many areas as possible, and that
24 the area that we've been talking about should be permanently
25 protected, and to please make the National Petroleum Reserve in

1 Alaska closed to all oil and gas leasing as outlined in the
2 Alternative A, I was able to review. And I'm also taking a
3 Biology course at University of Alaska. And also for years
4 I've been aware that all around the world animals are becoming
5 extinct. And we are worried about the consequences of this,
6 and also of global warming. And even if we save an animal from
7 extinction, that species has lost centuries of what we call
8 bio-diversity. And it'll also take centuries to be a healthy
9 species again and be able to survive small natural crises such
10 as floods and draughts. And the Arctic I see as one of the
11 last totally natural environments left on earth. And I think
12 that in its totally natural state is more valuable than all the
13 money and oil in the world. I think we have done enough
14 research, especially what I've heard in the earlier comments,
15 that show that deep down everyone knows that if open to more
16 oil drilling, the Arctic will inevitably never be the same.
17 And I don't think we can afford to make the same mistakes over
18 and over.

19 I hear also about responsible development which I
20 think, of course, should be expected. And I also understand
21 that the people who have lived with the land and animals for
22 centuries never went near the caribou during calving. They
23 were afraid of disturbing the caribou. And so I think that if
24 the presence of people can disturb caribou reproduction, then
25 the presence of modern apparatus must be even more disturbing.

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1 And so I don't think the wild animals can talk any more
2 than my sled dogs can, so I would just like to say, kind of on
3 behalf of them; I know it sounds silly, that if they could
4 speak out they would ask to be able to continue to live
5 undisturbed by modern intrusion.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Schlentner. Jeff Cook.

8 MR. COOK: Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Cook. I
9 reside at 458 Terrace Drive in Fairbanks. I was born and
10 raised in Fairbanks. And I currently serve as Vice President
11 of External Affairs for Mapco Alaska Petroleum. Today I am
12 presenting comments on behalf of the Alaska Oil and Gas
13 Association, AOGA. But in addition, the comments that I make
14 are endorsed by me personally and by my company, Mapco Alaska
15 Petroleum.

16 AOGA is an industry trade association whose 20 members
17 represent about the majority of oil and gas exploration,
18 production, transportation, refining, and marketing activities
19 in the state of Alaska. The National Petroleum Reserve -
20 Alaska Draft Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact
21 Statement supports selection of Alternative E. Alternative E
22 is the only land management regime which is consistent with the
23 standard Congress prescribed for the National Petroleum
24 Reserve - Alaska, and therefore, it's supportable by AOGA.

25 Congress stipulated that oil exploration and

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1 development would be the dominant use of the Petroleum Reserve
2 and authorized the Department of Interior to mitigate any
3 adverse environmental impacts. AOGA supports allowing access
4 to lands within the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska which
5 are considered to have the highest potential for oil and gas
6 resources. Public documentation shows that all the North Slope
7 commercial hydrocarbon occurrences exist along the Barrow Arch,
8 a portion of which contains the Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk River
9 oil fields. Over the last 10 years, 1.5 million barrels of oil
10 have been discovered along the Barrow Arch. The main
11 prospective area within the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska
12 lies along the south flank of the Barrow Arch within
13 approximately 20 miles of the present coastline.

14 Despite extensive drilling, no commercial oil or gas
15 accumulations have been found south of this narrow 20 mile
16 coastal strip. Forty-two separate prospects have been drilled
17 to date, and have resulted in six sub-economic gas discoveries,
18 14 percent of those drilled, one sub-economic oil discovery and
19 zero developments. AOGA supports full leasing in all areas of
20 the Petroleum Reserve.

21 AOGA believes that the current mitigation measures and
22 stipulations on oil and gas activities included in the Draft
23 Environmental Impact Statement will adequately mitigate
24 potential impacts and will provide full protection of wildlife,
25 sensitive habitat, and subsistence resources of the area.

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1 Potential effects on molting geese will be mitigated by buffers
2 around lakes and seasonal restrictions on aircraft, traffic and
3 construction. Effects on caribou calving will be mitigated by
4 pipeline height, road pipe separation, and seasonal traffic
5 controls. Remote access will be addressed by citing airstrips
6 away from sensitive habitats. Oil and gas leasing exploration
7 activities in the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska can take
8 place along with traditional subsistence uses of the land.

9 More than 20 years of oil and gas exploration and
10 production experience on the North Slope has shown that oil and
11 gas activities on state lands east of the Colville River can
12 co-exist with healthy fish and game populations and subsistence
13 activities. Oil and gas leasing exploration activities in the
14 NPR-A can and will be conducted in a manner which will not
15 interfere with subsistence uses in the planning area. AOGA
16 supports reasonable mitigation measures and stipulations which
17 are scientifically based and are supportable by the more than
18 20 years of experience and research in North Slope oil fields.

19 There are a number of mitigation measures that can be
20 applied to the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska exploration
21 and development activities to protect the environment and the
22 wildlife, including seasonal restrictions on activities,
23 buffers around lakes, traffic controls, pipeline heights, road
24 pipe separation and citing of facilities to avoid the most
25 sensitive habitats. However, AOGA believes that some

1 stipulations including in the -- included in the Draft
2 Environmental Impact Statement are not justified based on
3 science and experience. While buffers along high use goose
4 molting lakes are appropriate, the proposed service facility
5 distance setbacks for Alternative E are significantly larger
6 than necessary. Molting goose buffers of 1,640 and 3,280 feet
7 should be reduced to 1,000 feet as concluded appropriate in the
8 cooperative monitoring studies of goose and swan disturbances
9 for the Lisburne and Gas Handling I & II developments on the
10 North Slope.

11 Future developments within the National Petroleum
12 Reserve - Alaska will be significantly smaller than the Prudhoe
13 Bay and Kuparuk complexes. Therefore, reaction by caribou also
14 will be significantly less. Proposed traffic and aircraft
15 restrictions should be modified to allow more than four vehicle
16 convoys and one daily aircraft trip into the caribou area.

17 Alternative E proposed stipulations would prohibit
18 surface facilities within a four-mile-zone on the eastern
19 shoreline of Teshekpuk Lane and Colville Inlet. This
20 stipulation is overly restrictive since studies of the caribou
21 passage in the Prudhoe Bay Unit and the Kuparuk Unit found that
22 road pipe separation of 500 feet and five foot minimum pipe
23 heights are fully effective in providing unimpeded caribou
24 passage across pipelines and roads. Therefore, this
25 stipulation is unnecessary.

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1 It is important to find and develop new oil fields for
2 the nation's future energy security and to sustain Alaska's
3 economy as current North Slope oil production declines. It
4 will be a number of years even if we keep moving along and
5 approve exploration and development in that area before these
6 projects can be brought online.

7 AOGA supports Alternative E which allows full leasing
8 of the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska Northeast Planning
9 Area, and AOGA supports the National Petroleum Reserve -
10 Alaska's lease sale occurring during 1998.

11 Thank you very much for the opportunity to present
12 these comments on behalf of AOGA, on behalf of myself, and on
13 behalf of Mapco Alaska Petroleum.

14 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Cook. Next is Daniel Simien.

15 MR. SIMIEN: Good afternoon. My name is Dan Simien.
16 I'm President and Business Representative for Laborers' Local
17 942 here in Fairbanks. I'm speaking on behalf of the 1,000
18 plus members of Local 942.

19 We support Alternative E in which all lands in the NPR
20 are made available for oil and gas leasing for a number of
21 reasons. Our members have worked in construction on the North
22 Slope infrastructure and on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.
23 Employment has given us the ability to live and enjoy the great
24 opportunities this state has to offer its citizens. We are
25 contributors to all the non-profit organizations dedicated in

1 promoting better living conditions for the citizens of this
2 state. The members of our union spend their hard-earned
3 dollars supporting local businesses. We send our children to
4 the university, we purchase homes in this community, support
5 hospitals and medical communities with our health plans.

6 During the winter months, the only opportunity for
7 work, through our hard haul, is winter pipeline projects and
8 related -- and other related projects. Our members makes up --
9 make up approximately 30 percent of the pipeline construction
10 work force. There are three other unions that represent the
11 remaining 70 percent, all of whom make significant
12 contributions to the Alaska economy. If the decision is made
13 to lock up or limit exploration in a development in the NPR
14 economic impact for these citizens of Alaska would be
15 devastating.

16 Alternative E is the only land management option in the
17 Draft environmental Impact Statement that is consistent with
18 the standard Congress outlined for the Petroleum Reserve. In a
19 report by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources
20 of April 1997, it states that 23.5 million acres, NPR-A
21 encompassed tremendous geologic diversity and is under-explored
22 by modern industry standards. Yet acreage within the NPR-A has
23 not been offered for competitive leasing since July of 1994.
24 The application of modern exploration techniques, a better
25 understanding of Northern Alaska geology, seismic sequence

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1 analysis and 3-D seismic surveys, and other advancements should
2 help identify new prospects and reduce the drilling risk.

3 We oppose the creation of new conservation units in
4 expansion of the two existing Special Areas. Alaska contains
5 more than 57 million acres of federal wilderness and the NPR
6 was specifically set aside for oil and gas development. New
7 advancements in oil technology such as extended reach drilling,
8 small areas for drill sites and production pads, work force
9 training in the field of environmental awareness. Currently 16
10 hours of orientation is required for any worker to be sent to
11 the North Slope simply just to ensure that every precaution is
12 taken to protect wildlife and their habitat. We as productive
13 citizens of Alaska encourage responsible development of our
14 natural resources. And in closing, we urge the BLM to move
15 forward with the lease sale in 1998.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Simien. Next I have
18 Jim Plaquet.

19 MR. PLAQUET: Could I get all my brothers and sisters
20 of organized labor to stand, pipe fitters, laborers, operators?
21 My name is Jim Plaquet. I'm a Business Agent for the Operating
22 Engineers Local 302. I reside at 1444 Second Avenue. Like I
23 said, my name is Jim Plaquet, and I'm representing all these
24 Fairbanks men and women who are standing up.

25 The petroleum industry is an invaluable component of

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1 Alaska's and Fairbanks' economy. With Prudhoe Bay oil reserves
2 in decline, it is essential that all new areas be opened for
3 oil exploration and development.

4 The oil industry in Prudhoe Bay has a proven record of
5 environmental excellence that can't be compared to anywhere in
6 the world. I encourage BLM to move forward with the lease sale
7 in the National Petroleum Reserve in 1998.

8 We, the Fairbanks workers, want to go on record in
9 support of Alternative E, all lands available for oil and gas
10 leasing. We oppose the creation of new special areas or
11 expanding existing special areas. The oil and gas industry has
12 made tremendous technological strides. Advancements such as
13 directional and extended-reach drilling and seismic exploration
14 make environmentally safe development possible in virtually an
15 location.

16 If oil exploration and development in Alaska is
17 stifled, we ultimately stifle the Alaska economy. Countless
18 people, both directly and indirectly working for the oil
19 industry will suffer financial demise. We Fairbanks workers
20 have house payments and other bills to pay and the loss of
21 these jobs would have a devastating negative impact to us and
22 our community. Oil industry jobs have provided the needed
23 employment for Fairbanks workers to support their families.
24 The tax base provided by Fairbanks workers has allowed area
25 residents through tax dollars to sustain local businesses,

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1 schools, hospitals, and other essential community services.

2 Once again, I encourage BLM to move forward with the
3 lease sale in the National Petroleum Reserve in 1998 with area
4 wide leases. Opening the NPR is good for the country and for
5 all of us that live in Alaska.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Plaquet and members. Mike
8 Joyce from ARCO-Alaska.

9 MR. JOYCE: Thank you. My name is Mike Joyce. I am
10 the Senior Consultant for Biological Sciences at ARCO-Alaska
11 stationed in Anchorage. I am pleased to have this opportunity
12 to provide ARCO's perspective on the Draft Integrated Activity
13 Plan. This afternoon I'd would like to make four points for
14 your consideration.

15 First, this is a National Petroleum Reserve. It was
16 established for a single designated purpose. The Department of
17 Interior -- this is our second point, the Department of
18 Interior through their proposed stipulation that they presented
19 in the DEIS have told us what to do to protect the environment
20 anywhere within the planning area. We believe we can follow
21 those stipulations.

22 Point three, we have proven that we can find, develop,
23 and produce oil in a way that protects the environment on the
24 North Slope. A 25 year record of that success.

25 And finally, our fourth point is we believe strongly

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1 that now is the time to proceed with leasing because our nation
2 needs to strengthen our energy security.

3 The National Petroleum Reserve was established 70 years
4 ago. Since then, almost 20,000 miles of seismic data has been
5 acquired within the Reserve. In the early 1980s, there were a
6 series of lease sales leading to the drilling of only one well
7 by private industry. To date, there have been no commercial
8 discoveries. However, previous exploration confirms the area's
9 hydrocarbon potential. Since the last Petroleum Reserve lease
10 sale, much has changed in the Alaska oil and gas industry.
11 While ARCO's assessment of the Petroleum Reserve's resource
12 potential is confidential to our company, I can tell you that
13 lower development and operating costs and improvements in
14 exploration and production technology once again make this an
15 area of interest. ARCO believes that by using appropriate new
16 operational technology combined with appropriate environmental
17 stipulations, that oil and gas can be extracted from any part
18 of the planning area without harm to local fish and wildlife
19 populations and without interruption to the traditional land
20 uses of the area. Technical developments over the past 25
21 years have eliminated any significant impacts on the tundra
22 environment from oil and gas operations.

23 Government wildlife agencies and the oil industry have
24 conducted a series of joint agency/industry long-term
25 monitoring studies on the environment in Prudhoe Bay and

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1 Kuparuk. These studies have generally -- have generated
2 extensive and detailed information on the effects of oil and
3 gas production on the behavior of Arctic fish and wildlife.
4 The knowledge gained from these studies has enabled the
5 federal, state, and local governments to anticipate the effect
6 of oil and gas development may have on fish and wildlife
7 resources. And, more importantly, to therefore design and
8 prescribe specific operational requirements and restrictions to
9 eliminate any detrimental impact. Alternative E, which would
10 authorize leasing throughout the planning area contains more
11 than 80 operational stipulations.

12 To address concerns about the possible disturbance of
13 molting geese in the area northeast of Teshekpuk Lake, for
14 example, Alternative E would prohibit surface operations within
15 non-entry buffer zones of 3,280 feet around high-use goose
16 lakes and 1,640 feet around low-use lakes; also prohibit
17 construction activity between June 18 and August 20 and
18 prohibit helicopter traffic between June 15 and August 20.

19 Three specific studies conducted by ARCO in cooperation
20 with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental
21 Protection Agency have monitored pre and post development
22 impacts to swans, geese, and loons on the North Slope. These
23 studies have demonstrated that the proposed DEI stipulations
24 will be effective in eliminating detrimental impact on molting
25 geese. The DEIS stips (sic) give more than adequate

1 protection, protection with a wide margin of safety to geese
2 and other important species. Observance of the operational
3 limitations and prohibitions contained in these stipulations
4 will allow oil and gas development throughout the planning area
5 without harm to fish and wildlife resources.

6 Alternative E also ensures no interruption of
7 traditional uses of the land. Access to traditional hunting
8 and fishing areas have been guaranteed and will be enforced by
9 a joint subsistence oversight panel of federal, state, local,
10 and industry officials. We also would support additional lease
11 sale stipulations guaranteeing continued use of cabins and
12 other improvements built by people making traditional use of
13 lands within the Petroleum Reserve.

14 The deletion of portions of the planning area from the
15 land available for leasing, as proposed in Alternatives B, C,
16 and D, is not necessary to protect fish and wildlife or to
17 preserve these traditional uses of the land. It will, however,
18 sharply diminish likelihood of significant oil and gas
19 production and the substantial economic benefits to be derived
20 from that production. The oil and gas industry's extensive
21 exploration activities over the last 10 years in the area
22 between the Colville and the Canning Rivers has shown that on
23 the North Slope hydrocarbon deposits generally occur within 20
24 miles of the -- to the south of the Barrow Arch. Within this
25 20 mile strip of coastal plain, the industry has explored 30

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1 separate prospects and recorded 20 different discoveries. All
2 the producing fields in the North Slope are located within 20
3 miles of this -- of the coast.

4 By contrast, beyond this 20 mile strip, the industry
5 has drilled 42 separate prospects. Of these 42, only six gas
6 discoveries and one oil discovery were identified, none of
7 which were significant enough to warrant development.

8 We have brought a map with us. And on this map, we --
9 this map shows a solid black line which represents 20 miles
10 from the coast within the planning area. The map also outlines
11 areas proposed to be deleted from leasing by Alternatives D.
12 As you can see, Alternative D would allow access to only about
13 one half of the land in which the industry has the most
14 realistic chance of finding commercial quantities of oil and
15 gas.

16 On this map, and finally on the map, the areas in green
17 designate locations where surface facilities and surface
18 impacts would be prohibited under Alternative E. As you can
19 see, the protections created by the proposed stipulations are
20 substantial and far-reaching.

21 Oil is one of the mainstays of our nation's energy
22 budget, accounting for 40 percent of the U.S. energy supply and
23 97 percent of the U.S. transportation fuel. Through U.S. oil
24 consumption -- although U.S. oil consumption, now nearing the
25 record levels of the late 1970s, our domestic oil supply is

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1 shrinking, and U.S. production is at its lowest level in more
2 than 40 years. According the Department of Energy, domestic
3 oil reserves have declined 30 percent since Prudhoe Bay began
4 production, and domestic production has fallen 25 percent since
5 1986. Our nation is becoming more and more dependent on
6 foreign oil. If we are to continue to produce significant
7 portions of the oil we consume, then exploration must occur
8 today and occur in the most prospective parts of places like
9 the National Petroleum Reserve.

10 Finally, delineating, designating, permitting, and
11 building new oil fields in frontier areas of Alaska can take a
12 decade. Therefore, to conclude, ARCO believes that BLM should
13 make available for leasing all land within the high potential
14 20 mile strip. The proposed stipulations ensure protection of
15 wildlife and traditional land use through operational
16 requirements and restrictions. This is a Petroleum Reserve and
17 it was an area designated for petroleum development in 1923.
18 The industry has a proven record of environmentally responsible
19 development in the Arctic, and we believe now is the time to
20 proceed with this lease sale.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Joyce. Next I have
23 Linda Benson.

24 MS. BENSON: My name is Linda Benson. I'm here as a
25 private citizen. I'm not going to pretend that I understand

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1 all of the complex issues that need to be considered before oil
2 exploration is continued or expanded. My question -- I have a
3 fundamental question, though, that I hope that would be
4 considered and answered before any decision is made.

5 The gentleman before me just stated that we have
6 domestic oil supply shrinking and we need to strengthen our
7 energy security. So my question is why are we exporting
8 millions of gallons of oil to Asia, presently, if we are having
9 a crisis, and with no restrictions on the exportation and no
10 plan to write any restrictions for exporting oil? I think that
11 needs to be answered before any decision can be made. I agree
12 that it would be prudent for this generation to allow the next
13 generation to decide if there is an energy emergency. There
14 clearly is not one now.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Benson. Next is James Young.

17 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name is James Young.
18 I'm representing Great Northwest, Incorporated here in
19 Fairbanks. And I'll be very brief with this. Great Northwest
20 supports Alternative E, which allows full leasing of the
21 potential areas.

22 As a local general contractor in this area, we employ
23 nearly 100 union employees per year. These jobs normally range
24 between six and eight months because of our Alaska climate. By
25 opening the leasing areas, it would maintain our employment

1 throughout the year, which is very critical, we feel. These
2 people then would be able to help our economy, help our city,
3 our state. The economic benefits I think we all understand
4 what will happen.

5 We -- the bottom line is that we encourage BLM to move
6 forward with the lease sale. And thank you for your time.

7 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Young. Next is
8 Richard Chapell.

9 MR. CHAPPELL: Hi. My name's Richard Chapell and I'm
10 speaking here today as an Alaska citizen who values wildlife
11 resources. If oil exploration is allowed to take place, the
12 Bureau of Land Management needs to protect certain areas that
13 are intensively used by fish and wildlife such as the
14 Teshekpuk Lake area and the Colville River corridor.

15 The Special Protection Area suggested by the BLM for
16 protecting caribou, waterfowl and fishery resources look like a
17 good start, but the protection plans seem vague and temporary.
18 Before the development of the NPR-A proceeds, we need to
19 establish permanent wilderness status for the Teshekpuk Lake
20 and Colville River corridor areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
21 Service should have management control of these protected
22 wildlife areas to ensure that these wildlife resources aren't
23 eliminated or harmed by oil exploration.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chapell. Next is Dave DuHart.

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1 Is Dave DuHart here? Okay. I'll put that in the back and call
2 on him later. Howard Thies.

3 MR. THIES: Thank you. My name is Howard Thies. I was
4 born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. I live at 416 Slater
5 Drive. I'm the Vice President of Sourdough Express and I'm on
6 the Board of Directors of the Alliance Support Industry from
7 Anchorage in Alaska.

8 We feel as the Support Industry Alliance that we are as
9 a non-profit corporation -- basically, we worked hard in the
10 last two years to develop and provide services to the oil and
11 gas industry. We are oil field companies that supply and
12 support transportation enterprises, wholesale and retail
13 businesses, professional firms and private citizens.
14 Collectively we employ more than over 25,000 people in Alaska,
15 23,000 of which are permanent residents of Alaska. Since our
16 formation in 1979, we've advocated environmentally safe and
17 responsible development of oil and gas resources for the
18 benefit of all Alaskans.

19 While our members directly rely on oil and gas
20 activity, the truth is every Alaskan, every business, and every
21 resident in Alaska depends primarily on the importance of the
22 petroleum industry in our state. It is naive to believe that
23 the zero development will maintain a viable economy until we
24 live in a global economy that no longer requires people to
25 survive or a worker must have a job.

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1 It's important that we believe that we can be
2 responsible in development to meet energy and economic needs in
3 protection of the natural environment. We are -- we have
4 proven it worldwide. In Alaska today our oil and gas explorers
5 now reach a way larger small (sic) footprint than they have in
6 the land in the past. Oil field production has increased
7 phenomenally due to the industry's technological advances.

8 Still we know that the North Slope reserves will one
9 day run dry. And without this boost economy such as the
10 National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska presents will be a
11 promising oil field for the state of Alaska and its residents.
12 In fact, if we set aside for the very purpose to explore oil
13 and gas -- oil and gas exploration, it's not anew to NPR-A.

14 There have been three rounds of exploration since the
15 1940s. Even though the commercial reserves were not
16 discovered, prior surveys in drilling do produce the data that
17 indicates that all geological requirements for a commercial
18 oil field are present. According to BLM, NPR represents a
19 major portion of one of the most prolific oil and gas producing
20 geological systems in North America. Dormant since 1984, NPR-A
21 has been explored with the aid of modern seismic and drilling
22 techniques.

23 With this intent in mind, the Alliance, and myself,
24 strongly support Alternate E and the Draft Environmental Impact
25 Statement to the NPR-A Northeast Corner. Making all BLM lands

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1 in this area available for oil and gas leasing will make NPR-A
2 much more attractive location for exploration by adding some
3 measures of certainty to oil and gas exploration investors.
4 Because of the geological conditions, we make exploration
5 relatively expensive, four times more costly than any place in
6 the Lower 48. Alaska competes directly with international
7 locations. And to be competitive in this global market, Alaska
8 depends on a resource management policy that is responsive to
9 business.

10 The Alliance also encourages planners to eliminate
11 those elements in Alternate E which recommend creation of new
12 Special Areas off limits to leasing. This tactic also ignores
13 the tremendous technology strides made by the oil and gas
14 industry in example of today's achievements in the petroleum
15 acknowledged in the Alpine field discovered in 1994 on the
16 eastern border of the NPR-A.

17 Alpine was discovered in an area that had been heavily
18 explored in the past, proving the advanced seismic acquisition
19 proposition techniques were much more precise. Advancements
20 also make exploration much more extrusive at Alpine, as other
21 industries developed in the North Slope set new standards for
22 Arctic exploration and development. Long-reaching drilling,
23 smaller and fewer pads, elimination of reserve pits, use of ice
24 roads and pads, the underground injection of cutting fluids
25 have greatly reduced the industry's impact.

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1 The Alliance encourages BLM to ensure mitigation and
2 measures in special expectations to -- that are reasonable to
3 support by scientific studies. Erroneous and unnecessary
4 restrictions can make an otherwise leasable area impossible to
5 develop. We further encourage the BLM to move forward with
6 this lease sale in 1998. As Prudhoe Bay reserves dwindle,
7 Alaska's entire economy will ultimately rely on new discoveries
8 in the very near future.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Thies. Next is Richard Gaul.

11 MR. GAUL: Good Afternoon. My name is Richard Gaul. I
12 live in Fairbanks, 849 Bohnet Drive; it's actually outside of
13 town. I'm here to testify that I support Alternative E; gain
14 as much knowledge as possible, explore up there. There's a lot
15 of unknowns. And I think, well, in the construction industry
16 you want to know as much as possible. And I don't know much
17 really about the oil industry, but I assume it's even more so.

18 Eighteen, 20-some years ago, I came up here and I
19 worked on the caribou crossing for the pipeline back when they
20 figured the caribou wouldn't cross under the pipeline. Well,
21 we've since learned a lot about that. They tend to cross.

22 We know a lot more, the environmentalists, the
23 construction people. The oil companies, we know a lot more
24 than we did 20-some years ago. So I say go for it.

25 Thank you.

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1 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Gaul. Next is Steve.....

2 MR. FORTELNY: Can she do it?

3 MS. FOX: Fortelny?

4 MR. FORTELNY: Yeah.

5 MS. FOX: All right.

6 MR. FORTELNY: Thank you. As I was walking up here, I
7 saw Curtis Thomas in the parking lot. He told me to give them
8 hell. Well, I told him, well, I wasn't quite sure what side of
9 the fence I was on. I consider myself an environmentalist, but
10 I also work construction. I think any good American or Alaskan
11 is an environmentalist, really. You know, I've got conflicting
12 feelings on this. You know, it's a beautiful place up there.
13 But, you know, do I have all the facts? That's why I'm here.
14 And, you know, I don't know if I'll ever have all the facts,
15 just like the greenhouse effect, you know, the experts say
16 there is one, and the experts say there isn't one. So whether
17 we need to develop or not, leave it to the experts. You know,
18 I kind of deal with my feelings and the facts. And so, you
19 know, I'm trying to learn about this, the situation. Although
20 I'm no fool, you know, I work construction. And this is where
21 my paycheck comes from. I know it stimulates the economy. Oil
22 stimulates the economy. That's just the way it is. Our state
23 runs on oil.

24 I've worked about six to eight seasons on the North
25 Slope and I have first-hand experience of the standards of --

1 that are held up there. As far as if there's a rig that is
2 leaking anti-freeze, there's someone with a shovel right there,
3 right now, digging it up, putting it in the garbage bag. The
4 trash is picked up right now. I mean the standards are much
5 higher than the standards for the local oil for -- oil
6 production in our own backyard. I have first-hand experience
7 on that, too.

8 I have been to Siberia in the wintertime. And I --
9 they have an oil line there, too. It's laid on skids. And
10 it's leaking. It leaks a lot. It leaks like square miles of
11 oil, just out there. I've seen the North Slope. I mean there
12 are people, experts again, they're out there. I mean things
13 don't happen like that in Alaska. I think development can be
14 done up there in a good way. I mean, whether we need the oil
15 or not, that's -- I mean I could use the job, but whether we
16 need the oil or not, I really don't know.

17 I -- that oil field will develop -- be developed, it's
18 just a matter of when. I would like to see the State -- to go
19 on record, to see the State put a percentage of its money aside
20 to -- for research to develop an alternative energy source.
21 You know, we've heard this term so much and so long, and it's
22 going to be someone else. Or maybe it's -- you know, maybe you
23 already have one and it's not being released because we have
24 use the oil up first or for whatever reason. Well, we have a
25 wonderful resource up there, and with all the persuasions and

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1 divisions of thought and the gut feelings that swirl around on
2 this issue, there's one thing that I do know, and that is that
3 in about three generations, there isn't going to be oil. And
4 we're going to have to be doing something else. We're not
5 going to go back to the covered wagon. We're going to be doing
6 something else. And I think it's not too soon to start doing
7 that something else, you know, right about now. You know, we
8 had the -- I remember the '79 oil embargo. I remember the big
9 oil lines. And then I remember the cars that came out with the
10 great gas mileage. And then I see now, 1998, and these huge
11 four wheel drives, what are these called, these utility
12 vehicles that are just bombarding on -- it's like what oil
13 crisis? You know, I'd like to see gasoline at \$5 dollars a
14 gallon; that's what it is in Europe and London.

15 I just want to close with one thing, and that is, as
16 long as this country is addicted to crude oil, we will go
17 anywhere and do anything to supply the fix.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Fortelny. All right. Steve
20 Springer.

21 MR. SPRINGER: Hi. Thank you. I'm here to represent
22 Arctic Audubon Society here in Fairbanks. And in the absence
23 of a national energy policy and without a clear and compelling
24 rationale for why leasing must occur now, Alternative A is the
25 logical alternative. However, in a decision -- if a decision

1 is made to lease portions of the planning area, we strongly
2 urge you to modify Alternative B to better reflect my
3 conservation concerns for this remarkable area.

4 Alternative B prohibits leasing in the most critical
5 wildlife and fish habitats. Modification is required, however,
6 to provide permanent protection for the Teshekpuk Lake and the
7 Colville River Special Areas. To adequately protect these
8 critical wildlife habitats, it is essential that you seek
9 permanent protection through legislative designation from
10 future leasing and development. This protection must include a
11 prohibition of roads and pipelines across the Special Areas.

12 In recognition of their high wildlife values, the
13 Secretary of the Interior in 1977 designated Teshekpuk Lake and
14 upper Colville River as Special Areas within the National
15 Petroleum Reserve - Alaska. This area along the North Slope of
16 Arctic Alaska encompasses valuable fish and wildlife habitat
17 and outstanding wilderness recreation opportunities. The
18 Teshekpuk Lake Special Area provides critical habitat for
19 calving caribou and nesting, staging, and molting ducks, geese,
20 and swans. The bluffs of the Colville River are important
21 nesting areas for the Arctic peregrine falcon and other birds
22 of prey. The Colville River also provides important habitat
23 for moose, brown bears, wolves, wolverines and nesting
24 songbirds.

25 Oil and gas development in these special areas and

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1 other habitats designated for no leasing under Alternative B
2 would jeopardize wildlife and fish populations in these areas.

3 In summary, we would recommend the following actions
4 regarding the NPR-A Draft Environmental Impact Statement; no
5 leasing in the areas defined in Alternative B, prohibit roads
6 and pipelines in the no lease areas defined in Alternative B;
7 seek permanent protection through legislative action for the
8 Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and the Colville River Special
9 Area; and we need to conduct a new analysis to more adequately
10 address the cumulative effects of leasing on fish and wildlife
11 populations and habitats throughout the planning area and all
12 of NPR-A.

13 Thank you for considering our request for responsible
14 conservation alternative for the planning area with the
15 National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska, and for allowing me the
16 time to speak on behalf of the members of Arctic Audubon.
17 Thanks.

18 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Springer. Next is
19 Roger Burggraf.

20 MR. BURGGRAF: I'm Roger Burggraf, live at 830 Sheep
21 Creek Road, Fairbanks, Alaska, representing myself. I am in
22 support of Alternative E, which is to continue current
23 management activities and make all of the planning area
24 available for oil and gas lease sales. I feel that development
25 of this area can be done in a environmentally sound and

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1 responsible manner, and that there are adequate, you know,
2 safeguards to ensure that this is done.

3 Basically, that's my comments.

4 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Burggraf. Next is
5 Fred Heflinger.

6 MR. HEFLINGER: Yes, Thank you. I'm Fred Heflinger,
7 and I'm from Fairbanks. And I'm here, I'm in support of
8 Alternative E. There's a lot of people that don't want roads
9 or anything built up there. I hope they build a road right up
10 through the center of it so I can drive up there and look at
11 it.

12 As far as harming the wildlife and stuff, just like
13 Fairbanks here, if we all left tomorrow, the wildlife would
14 walk around here like we'd never been here. And I don't know
15 what's wrong with these people that think we're hurting too
16 much.

17 There's a lot of union members here, and I hope you --
18 I'm not a union member, but I hope you all speak because most
19 of you want to hide behind your leadership and walk away; and
20 you ought to talk. Because everybody better say that they want
21 a livelihood. And I want that oil. I want the revenues for
22 the State of Alaska so I don't have to pay so darn many taxes,
23 and I can get the benefits that they give me because I do get
24 some benefits. And I'm all for development. And Alternative E
25 is the only way to go.

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1 As a matter of fact, they're talking about these
2 helicopters, they don't want the oil companies flying them
3 certain months of the year. Well, let's not let BLM fly them
4 either. Let's not let any of these wilderness lovers like --
5 that want to go up there and study caribou fly around with
6 helicopters either. Let's have the same rules for all. Let's
7 not have any of these jerks like Marlin Perkins up there with a
8 helicopter running around making a movie scaring the hell out
9 of the animals, too.

10 So I think that maybe we ought to -- if we're going to
11 look at this, if the oil companies have to play by certain
12 rules, let's let all the federal agencies and everybody play by
13 the same ones, and keep those helicopters off of there if they
14 want it that way. And I don't want to deny anybody who's got
15 any rights there already, any rights. They should be able to
16 do whatever they been doing in the past. But, you know, this
17 stuff about pipelines polluting, that's a bunch of garbage.
18 That's -- I haven't seen much pollution from that pipeline at
19 all. And let's see -- yeah, I don't want the area closed. And
20 these people want to run up there with dog sleds and stuff and
21 -- or run around the world with dog sleds. Dog -- I got to
22 listen to dogs bark all the time. I don't like listening to
23 sled dogs. And I don't like them dropping their feces in my
24 yard and stuff, so there's another way to look at these dogs,
25 too. And so any development up there is going to be transient

1 within 100 years it'll probably be gone. And the animals up
2 there won't even notice that we've been there. So let's
3 develop it.

4 And thank you.

5 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Heflinger. Call Dave DuHart
6 again.

7 MR. DuHART: Dave DuHart, private citizen. And I just
8 got done working on Alpine and Badami and Warthog, and I
9 thought I'd share some information on what I learned up there.

10 I'm an environmentalist, but I get my money from the
11 oil companies. Some people might consider that hypocritical.
12 And 10 years ago, I would've too, because ARCO and BP had no
13 environmental program at all. They had reserve pits, and
14 dumped the mud right over the side out on the Cook Inlet, but
15 lot has changed. I mean not just that we recycle glass and
16 paper and batteries and light bulbs and everything else, but
17 solid waste disposal is taking care of the reserve pit. So
18 that was a great, great environmental malfunction that's been
19 -- we re-inject our oil solids which helps bring the oil to the
20 surface, and you use less surface of the pad along with
21 directional drilling, like someone else has mentioned. But I
22 don't think that they've mentioned side-track drilling where
23 you could put a small pad and drill out four miles, 360
24 degrees. It's going to make for less pads and less
25 environmental impact up there.

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1 First before I could even go to Alpine, I had to go to
2 school here and get these environmental cards. Here's a little
3 eight hour TAPS class, where they tell you how to act. And
4 here's a 40-hour hazardous waste card that shows that if you
5 wreck the environment or do anything out of line, aloha, you're
6 fired. Here's an eight-hour BP card. It's more of the same,
7 really. Here's a 40-hour hazardous card, which allows me to
8 respond in case there's a spill. And blah, blah, blah. You
9 can't even get a job now unless you're environmentally aware.
10 In other words, if you walk on the tundra, you get a warning,
11 even though the caribou do it all the time. If you walk on the
12 tundra one time, you get a warning. You do it again, you're
13 fired. If you feed a fox or leave your garbage out, you're
14 fired. If you drive a truck there, they give you a little
15 liner that you put in the back of your truck. It's a 3 x 3
16 visqueen liner. And if you park your truck and you don't put
17 your liner under the engine to catch the dripping oil, you're
18 fired. That's it. They're just not going to put up with it
19 anymore. When you fill your tank up, if you don't have your
20 liner under the nozzle, and oil drips onto the ground and you
21 don't report it, you're fired. I wonder how many containments
22 are under the cars out here in the parking lot today. I'd
23 assume that more oil is going to be dripped in this parking lot
24 than the whole Sadlerochit Field up north.

25 Anyway, I know you guys can't make a final decision on

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1 this. It's a public forum and it doesn't mean anything. But
2 let's just say that 20 percent of the nation's oil is produced
3 in Prudhoe Bay, okay? And the Sadlerochit Field and the
4 Kuparuk Field are diminishing. Now, Badami, Alpine, the
5 Lisburne and the Endicott, if you study the record of their
6 environmental impact, I think you'll find it's really, really
7 excellent. The last 10 years they've become so much more
8 environmentally aware. And we want to get away from thinking
9 that these oil field fat cats are just cigar smoking
10 carpet-bagging interlopers. They're not. They're geologists
11 and they're laborers and they're operators and they're
12 technicians. And they care about this land because we all live
13 in it. And we no more think of trashing it than we would of
14 changing our oil in the driveway and letting it seep into the
15 ground.

16 So I support Alternative E. I think we've proven we
17 can get the oil out of the ground with very minimal
18 environmental impact, and we're going to have to meet the
19 energy in the 21st century. If we don't produce it now, when
20 are we going to produce it?

21 Thanks for your time.

22 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. DuHart. Okay, I have one more
23 person to call. So if anyone else is thinking of providing
24 some testimony this afternoon, I'd like you to go over to the
25 table by the door and fill out a form. Thanks.

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1 The last person I have is Dave Miller.

2 MR. MILLER: Good afternoon. My name is Dave Miller.
3 I live in Fairbanks now. I've just moved back from Barrow. I
4 worked on the first pipeline. And after that was done, I moved
5 to Barrow in 1980. I been living there for the last 17 years.
6 And for the last 17 years I've seen -- I've stood in herds of
7 thousands of caribou. And I've seen ducks and geese in the
8 spring and the fall from horizon to horizon. And I've seen the
9 Eskimos up there get a full harvest of seals, walruses, ducks,
10 caribou. And in the 17 years I've been there, I've never seen
11 any change in the migratory patterns for any negative harvest.

12 I support Alternative E. I'm currently working out of
13 302, and this is a personal statement. But anyway, like I
14 said, I've seen no change in the caribou herds or the harvest
15 of the walrus or whales or anything else. And I'm all for
16 opening up the oil fields. I have a family to support, and if
17 you don't open them up, it will be a very negative impact on
18 the state's economy.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Miller. We have one more?
21 Okay. C.W. Mahlen.

22 MR. MAHLEN: How do you do? Thank you very much. I'm
23 very interested in the testimony today, and I view it as very
24 good. There's one thing I'd like to summarize on a little bit.
25 I think there were a couple misconceptions in some of the

1 statements here. We're talking about spilling oil on the
2 tundra in Siberia and Russia and other countries, burning rain
3 forests by other countries, our developing the oil that we use.
4 And I really don't think that we should depend on companies,
5 economies that do that type of exploration and development to
6 provide our oil. And it was a misconception I think by
7 Linda Benson saying something that we had a surplus. Well, we
8 import 80 percent of our oil from countries that aren't as
9 environmentally astute as Alaska. And so I don't think that's
10 the proper thing to do. I think we should develop oil in our
11 reserves, in our strength, in our country where we can control
12 it. And I think that this is -- we cannot necessarily have a
13 surplus of oil when we're importing all the oil from these
14 countries in the Middle East.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Mahlen. Is there anyone else
17 who wishes to speak? Seeing no one, I'd like to thank the
18 audience for giving all the speakers their attention. It
19 really helps us to hear what they had to say. And this
20 concludes the formal hearing on the NPR-A EIS and the ANILCA
21 Section 810 Findings. I'd like to thank you all for coming and
22 encourage you to supplement your oral comments by submitting
23 written comments to the addresses on the information sheets
24 that have been made available. Thank you.

25 ***** (END OF AFTERNOON HEARING) *****

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1 **EVENING HEARING**

2 (On record - 7:00 p.m.)

3 MS. FOX: I would like to call this hearing to order.

4 It's now 7:00 o'clock, the appointed time to start the hearing
5 and I would like to start on time and try to keep things going
6 tonight. If you desire to speak and you have not yet signed up
7 to speak, please do so now by completing one of these request
8 forms at the front table. My name is Peggy Fox and I'll be
9 conducting this hearing. Here with me at my right is Dee
10 Ritchie, the District Manager for BLM for the Northern
11 District. And to my far right is Shirley Cohen who's a court
12 reporter who will record all the comments tonight.

13 The purpose of the hearing is to formally receive
14 comments on the Bureau of Land Management's Draft Integrated
15 Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast
16 Portion of the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska and the
17 ANILCA Section 810, (Subsistence) Evaluation and Finding. This
18 hearing is being held pursuant to the National Environmental
19 Policy Act, or NEPA, and the Alaska National Interest Lands
20 Conservation Act, or ANILCA. It satisfies NEPA's requirement
21 that BLM take public comments on major federal actions and
22 ANILCA's requirement that we conduct hearings on possible
23 actions which may impact subsistence resources or activities.

24 Your comments tonight will serve several purposes.
25 Your comments on the ANILCA Section 810 subsistence evaluation

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1 can tell us whether we have correctly identified and assessed
2 the effects of the various alternatives in the Draft EIS on
3 subsistence uses and needs. Your comments can tell us whether
4 or not other lands are available for the management schemes
5 proposed and you can suggest other alternatives which would
6 reduce or eliminate effects on public lands needed for
7 subsistence purposes. You can also tell us if the proposed
8 findings in the Draft EIS are accurate and whether we have left
9 anything out of our subsistence evaluation.

10 You can point out information about the resources or
11 uses of the planning area which our draft document may have
12 overlooked or not analyzed correctly; we want to be sure to
13 have all the relevant information before we make a decision.
14 Also, you can provide us a sense of what the public wants to
15 occur on these lands. Decision-makers want to know where the
16 public stands on the issues involved in the future management
17 of this part of the NPR-A.

18 The Draft EIS was placed on the Internet on November
19 24th and paper copies were released to the public the first
20 week of December. Several public information meetings were
21 held in Alaska during December to answer questions about the
22 document and to promote dissemination of the Draft EIS.

23 This hearing is one of a series being conducted in the
24 Alaskan communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Barrow,
25 Nuiqsut, Wainwright, Anchorage and here tonight in Fairbanks.

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1 Hearings in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, California are
2 also being held to ensure a full opportunity for the public to
3 participate.

4 In addition to these hearings, comments on the Draft
5 EIS have been accepted by the Bureau since December 12th, 1997,
6 the start of the official comment period and will continue to
7 be accepted if postmarked by March 12th, 1998. And I would
8 like you to note that that is an extended comment period.
9 Comments may be provided orally at these hearings, or in
10 writing via the Internet, by facsimile, or by regular mail.
11 Informational materials with phone numbers, addresses,
12 including the Internet address, as well as blank forms for
13 comments are provided on the table at the back of the room.

14 All comments provided will be compiled, analyzed, and
15 considered by the Bureau in preparing the Final Environmental
16 Impact Statement, due to be released in late June 1998.

17 The way we will proceed is I will call the names of
18 those who have indicated they wish to make oral comments to
19 come up to the microphone. You will then state your name,
20 state which organization you represent, if any, and give your
21 comments. If you have written comments, I will ask you to
22 provide them to the person at the table in the back of the
23 room.

24 At this time I have approximately 10 request forms
25 completed. Based on that and our time limits, I'll ask each

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1 speaker to try to confine him or herself to approximately five
2 minutes. If you reach the time limit, I'll ask you for summary
3 comments and then request you to step down to let others speak.
4 When we complete the list of people wishing to speak, and as
5 time allows I may offer others the opportunity to speak.

6 I and the BLM personnel here tonight are here to
7 listen. During the hearing, we will not be taking questions.
8 Following the hearing, if you do have further questions, I'm
9 sure there will be individuals available to answer them.
10 Lastly, I would request that the audience be considerate of the
11 speaker and give him or her the courtesy of your attention.

12 We will begin now with the first person who requested
13 to speak, and that's Mr. Joe Thomas.

14 MR. THOMAS: Good evening. My name is Joe Thomas and
15 I'm the Business Manager Secretary/Treasurer of Laborers' Local
16 942 based here in Fairbanks.

17 First of all, I'd like to thank you for holding these
18 hearings and I'd like to just make a few brief comments. You
19 have or will have heard much testimony today about the economic
20 impact of the oil industry on Alaska, and Fairbanks in
21 particular; there is no question of that. My comments are more
22 as to what does or does not get done and how that occurs.

23 The Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4, if that's still
24 how it's referred to, has been explored for 40 or more years.
25 One of the maps in my office here in Fairbanks is dated 1973

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1 and identifies the Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4, as that is
2 what it is. Much work has been to identi -- has been done to
3 identify sensitive areas in the Reserve that require specific
4 and special attention.

5 Over the years I have learned that there is only --
6 there are basically two sides to a question, particularly
7 questions like the development of PET 4, and that is to develop
8 or not to develop. Those that do not want it developed cannot
9 take the extreme -- or all that oppose it cannot take the
10 extreme side, so there is always alternatives offered. Those
11 alternatives are usually unacceptable and only serve to delay
12 the process. This delay tactic has led to the demise of many
13 worthwhile projects. Those who would like to develop or build
14 cannot wait forever so they simply move along over a period of
15 time. In the case of the oil industry, they move to another
16 area or country and make their investment there. This is one
17 part of the reason that the gold industry almost came to an end
18 in state of Alaska. Regulations being what they were,
19 permitting processes being what they were, we saw almost the
20 end of the industry that basically built Alaska.

21 Most Alaskans I believe and know -- or those that I
22 know like the lifestyle of Alaska. They appreciate the
23 environment, and that's why we live here. Some like myself who
24 were born here, people believe don't know any better, and
25 that's the only reason that we're still here.

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1 People here need work. Without jobs and jobs in
2 industries such as Alaska has a real reliance on mineral
3 development, there would be no need for the infrastructure to
4 support them. There would be no need for those other services.
5 We all can't just serve each other pizzas and take in each
6 other's laundry.

7 I believe the planning area should be made available to
8 leasing, and with reasonable requirements that allow for
9 caribou migration, calving, as well as provision for waterfowl
10 and other animals that live and are inhabitats of the area.
11 The Prudhoe Bay development can readily provide the baseline
12 for development in the planning area. We certainly have
13 learned from our mistakes and Congress has authorized the
14 Department of Interior to ensure that development will be done
15 in an environmentally responsible manner. As I said, with the
16 language that exists and the authorization and the oversight
17 mandated by Congress for the Department of the Interior it is
18 not a question of how to do it.

19 There still seems to be a question to some as to how
20 can we stop the development, regardless of the safeguards. We
21 should be past that point by now. We should be moving forward
22 in a responsible manner and develop the planning area --
23 whoops, develop the planning area in a reasonable manner. I
24 think the provisions can be made. I think that the -- that all
25 things will be taken into consideration. I believe that your

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1 report was well done. And I can't tell you how much I think
2 that it is a reasonable development and is certainly called for
3 and will be done, I believe, by the industry as I view them in
4 a fashion that will represent the needs of everybody who's
5 involved.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Thomas. Next I have
8 Jon Miller.

9 MR. J. MILLER: Did you want our address also?

10 MS. FOX: Yes. That'll be fine.

11 MR. J. MILLER: Was that part of.....

12 MS. FOX: Thank you.

13 MR. J. MILLER: My name is Jon Miller. I live here in
14 Fairbanks, 2630 Home Run. Thank you for this opportunity to
15 comment on this very important document tonight. The summary
16 of the Draft EIS begin with the words, "Dear reader, welcome
17 and thank you for your interest in the future of Arctic
18 Alaska." These are indeed apt words because what happens to
19 the NPR-A will indeed effect a major portion of the North Slope
20 of Alaska.

21 I'd like to make three points about the
22 Petroleum Reserve and the Draft EIS. The first is that the
23 Petroleum Reserve is a magnificent wilderness area. And
24 together with the Noatak and gates of the Arctic conservation
25 areas to the south, it's the largest expanse in de facto

1 wilderness that we have in the state and in the country.

2 Two companions and I spent six weeks crossing the NPR-A
3 from Kasegaluk Lagoon in the west to Prudhoe Bay in the east.
4 We did that by lining our boats up the Utukok and then taking
5 advantage of that elevation by floating down the Colville. It
6 was -- we spent 40 days without seeing another human being. We
7 didn't even see a small plane fly overhead. It was fantastic.
8 We spent that time in the company of wolves, grizzlies,
9 caribou, musk-oxen, down near the Beaufort Sea. And when we
10 reached the Colville River delta, there was no mistake that
11 we'd come to the end of that wilderness journey. The first
12 night that we were on the delta, we could see flares from -- 40
13 gas flares to the east in the Kuparuk and the Oliktok Fields.
14 This country is not country where you can hide the artifacts of
15 humans very well. You can see a long, long ways.

16 Make no mistake, the NPR-A is a national treasure and
17 the merits of costs of opening these public lands for oil
18 development by private corporation should be very carefully
19 weighed by the public. The rushed schedule, scarcity of public
20 hearings around the country and general shortage of publicity
21 about the NPR-A all preclude the public making an informed
22 decision, I feel.

23 I would urge that BLM choose Alternative A, no oil and
24 gas lease sales at this time in order to protect public
25 interest from overly hasty review process. And I do emphasize

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1 at this time I'm not suggesting that the entire area is
2 suitable for wilderness designation, but I believe the process
3 to date has been entirely inadequate for the public to make an
4 informed decision.

5 My second point is that the Draft EIS does not
6 adequately address the cumulative effect of the expanding oil
7 production on wildlife recreation and traditional subsistence
8 activities across the entire North Slope. It does little to
9 explain, predict, or plan how the alternative management
10 scenarios described herein will actually affect Arctic Alaska
11 beyond the limits of the planning area.

12 Finally, EIS should make a concerted attempt to pla --
13 excuse me, a concerted attempt to place its alternative
14 management plans in a larger temporal and geographic content.
15 For example, development of the northeast portion of the
16 Reserve, which we're considering today, will intensify pressure
17 to continue expanding westward. Eventually coal and mineral
18 extraction in the southern and western portion of the Reserve
19 will become economically feasible. The fact that oil
20 production today will pre-dispose further development later is
21 not even mentioned in the Draft. This seems to me to be an
22 example of a general failure to accurately describe and predict
23 important cumulative impacts.

24 Third and last, the Petroleum Reserve was set aside to
25 provide petroleum reserves during a time of national need.

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1 Since large oil reserves are not present as originally
2 anticipated, it cannot fulfill this purpose. It was never
3 intended to serve the ends of corporate profit, and I would
4 suggest that the wilderness, wildlife, recreation and
5 subsistence values are far a greater and more lasting resource
6 than even the large amounts of oil that originally expected to
7 be there.

8 I would urge BLM to consider the long-term public good
9 and to make a much more concerted effort to involve the public
10 in the decision-making process prior to deciding the fate of
11 these important public lands. And to this end, I urge you to
12 adopt Management Option A, which leaves the greatest room for
13 further planning. I also hope that the Final EIS will contain
14 a much more thorough description of long-term cumulative
15 impacts and the protective and mitigating measures that can be
16 taken to reduce detrimental impacts on wildlife wilderness
17 subsistence and recreation values. And if I have -- do I
18 have.....

19 MS. FOX: Yes, go ahead.

20 MR. J. MILLER: Just as a postscript, the alternatives,
21 other than Alternative A, describe three different possible
22 levels of protection for the Colville River as a wild and
23 scenic river. And during the three weeks or so that we floated
24 down the river, every day we climbed one of the wonderful
25 bluffs that were available alongside of the river and look out

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1 over some of the vastest expanses of undisturbed land I've ever
2 seen anywhere. Magnificent country. The scale is staggering,
3 even by Alaskan standards, day-after-day.

4 Well, we spent two days once, and probably 50 river
5 miles we could see a very small white shack off in the distance
6 that was some sort of -- I don't know, some sort of human
7 structure. For two days we could see that. Well, when they
8 talk about a half mile buffer, scenic buffer, along the wild
9 and scenic river, that's rather absurd in my estimation. How
10 about a 20 mile buffer instead if you really want to preserve
11 the wild character of the river?

12 Thank you very much.

13 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Miller. Robert Fox.

14 MR. FOX: Hello. My name is Robert Fox of 815 Sixth
15 Avenue, Fairbanks. I'm here to speak in behalf of leasing and
16 oil development of the oil reserves in National Petroleum
17 Reserve - Alaska.

18 I've been in Alaska since 1950, and have a deep and
19 abiding love for the land most of us call home. I have
20 travelled the Brooks Range, fished the Kobuk River, hunted
21 moose and caribou while floating the 200 miles of the Sheenjack
22 River.

23 I doubt that few of those speaking against NPR-A
24 leasing have had the opportunity to visit the Prudhoe Bay
25 facilities, but I have. And I have nothing but praise for ARCO

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1 and Alyeska for the high standards that they have exercised in
2 these Alaskan oil fields. They are remarkable clean and free
3 of litter. The facilities are in excellent shape and
4 maintained at all time. And they are well-planned to provide a
5 minimum of disturbance to the environment. The wildlife is in
6 excellent shape. Caribou, grizzly bears, musk-ox, moose, and
7 many other species flourish throughout the area and even
8 benefit from the gravel pads placed in the area of development.
9 Fish and waterfowl enjoy clean water throughout the area and,
10 no, it is not contaminated by oil field development.

11 Environmentalism is big business and finding fault and
12 generating opposition for leasing in NPR-A is good for
13 business. What would happen to the fountain of great donations
14 if, God forbid, they would actually find that there is some
15 good that comes out of oil development?

16 Though I'm not speaking on behalf of the Alaska Outdoor
17 Council, I can certainly testify that a great many of our
18 membership are in favor of such development. We find jobs in
19 the oil industry. We are able to build and buy homes because
20 of the economy that is stabilized by the oil industry. We are
21 able to purchase cars, boats, and contribute to the economy of
22 Alaska. And I suggest to you that every man, woman, and child
23 in Alaska has benefitted greatly from oil development. We
24 receive annual dividend checks, we have significantly improved
25 our schools throughout the state, and we have a tremendous

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1 savings account for future generations. Thus, it becomes quite
2 ironic that most of those -- that those opposing development
3 will continue to fly in aircrafts that use oil products, buy
4 cars that use oil products, heat their homes with oil field
5 products, and stand in front of you and criticize oil field
6 development, regardless of how environmentally sound the plans
7 may be. Go figure.

8 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Fox. David van den Berg.

9 MR. VAN DEN BERG: Good evening. My name is
10 David van den Berg. I'm representing myself. I'm opposed to
11 leasing in the National Petroleum Reserve at this time through
12 this Draft Environmental Impact Statement as the vehicle. I've
13 been up north, travelled widely up north. I've been through
14 the Prudhoe oil fields. I've seen what's going on up there. I
15 had the good fortune to spend a lot of time both in the summer
16 and winter on the Colville. And when I read through this
17 Environmental Impact Statement, my number 1 concern is that the
18 range of alternatives are not doing enough to protect the known
19 surface resources that we know to be up there.

20 This EIS is a good assemblage of information, and I
21 wish I could praise it more, but because it raises more
22 questions than it gives me answers, I'm just going to spend my
23 time critiquing it.

24 What I'd like to start with is the 18-month time line.
25 And this is -- this might be water under the bridge at this

1 point, but it's something I'd like to continue to raise because
2 I think for the sake of something that most of us don't
3 understand, we're on an 18-month time line.

4 And, Dee Ritchie, I don't want to point any fingers,
5 but you're the only man with the moral fiber to say it like it
6 is. And you said in Nuiqsut, the time frame, the 18-month time
7 frame was chosen in a meeting by the Secretary of the Interior
8 and the Governor of this state. That's a political decision.
9 I don't think that's a good measure for the resource. I don't
10 think it's good for the people, and I don't see that as you
11 hear criticisms and suggestions on how to improve this process,
12 I don't think that it should suffer for a political
13 consideration.

14 I think we can do the best job we can with this Draft
15 EIS. The reason we need to do the best job that we can is
16 because this is going to be the sum of the work for any and all
17 future activity in the National Petroleum Reserve. Every
18 subsequent action relating back to this initial leasing
19 decision is going to tier off of this document. So I think we
20 need to be real careful and make sure it reflects all the
21 public interests in that public domain up there.

22 I don't think that the scope was broad enough from the
23 beginning. Under NEPA, you're supposed to give us a full range
24 of alternatives, and you've given us five alternatives that
25 range from status quo management to full-on hard core leasing.

1 Limiting the scope results in at least a failure to
2 consider the whole NPR-A, and that leaves out at least two
3 important considerations. We're not able to take up occupancy,
4 a consideration of occupancy on the land nor mineral closures
5 which is one of these days bound to come up. Also limiting
6 the scope, it didn't allow -- in your cumulative case analysis,
7 it didn't really allow for enough oil fields to be considered
8 when you're trying to grapple with the question of what is the
9 extent of change up on the North Slope. And so that doesn't
10 allow you to extrapolate and to make enough conclusions about
11 what to expect in the future. You did not include enough
12 oil fields, and if I have time I'll read some of those into the
13 record. And again, by limiting the scope, you've not allowed
14 enough management tools to give real protection to the known
15 surface resources up there.

16 The need for this Environmental Impact Statement as
17 discussed in the text, it's really the opportunity for the
18 agency to build its legs to stand on. For the IAP, for the
19 Integrated Activity Plan, it said that "we're undertaking this
20 to determine the appropriate multiple use in management of the
21 area", yet there's no demonstration of a change in use patterns
22 up in the NPR-A. It's an area that's far, far from roads. And
23 it's only got a resident population of about 450 people. What
24 have been the changes in use patterns that justify the
25 engagement of an IAP?

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1 I've asked repeated Don Mears of your agency for
2 documentation of industry interest. There's an annual process
3 through which an industry can submit the letters of interest in
4 certain areas. I've not seen any. It may well exist, but I
5 don't know. There's no legal hammer to compel the Secretary to
6 offer these leases. So again, the question of need, why? Why
7 are we going through this?

8 And finally for need, what's the national interest?
9 What national interest is served by leasing in the
10 Petroleum Reserve.

11 Getting back to my primary concern about no
12 protections. There's not a conservation alternative, and I
13 don't think tonight is going to be my best time to help you
14 along with that, but I will submit some written comments, as
15 will others. But in with these alternatives, I don't think
16 that Secretary Babbitt has the appropriate tools or the full
17 range of tools to protect the surface values up there. A place
18 to start that you can start is with the stipulations, the 82
19 stipulations that apply to whatever leased acreage, and they
20 apply to the special areas. If they're special areas, let's
21 treat them as special. And let's not allow for roads, let's
22 not allow for pipelines, let's not allow for material sites.

23 I think we need to give some real teeth to special
24 areas. One of the biggest problems is that you've made the
25 assumption that all development will be roadless, and you based

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1 that on Alpine. Alpine has yet to be built. It's -- they're
2 just putting in an ice road this year or this winter to get the
3 material in to actually construct it this summer.

4 Mike Joyce reminds us that the current assumption is
5 that sales of oil pipelines from NPR-A would not have
6 associated roads, but this would have to be decided on a case-
7 by-case basis. Eventually, there could be a threshold number
8 or size of fields when roads to the oil fields are a less
9 disturbance than the alternatives. So when you make
10 assumptions that all of these oil -- that whatever the
11 development ensues is going to be without roads, you miss an
12 opportunity to do the impacts analysis. And I think also if
13 there's going to be roads there, that's clearly going to have
14 an impact on your ability to protect the surface resources.

15 Also, with staging areas, from the discussion in the
16 EIS, I can't find any other staging area than Lonely. It seems
17 like that's going to be the place where most of the material
18 are going to make landfall if they don't come in over ice road.
19 And Lonely, as you know, is right in the middle of the
20 Teshekpuk Lake Special Area. And I just think there needs to
21 be a more rigorous assessment of really what is going to happen
22 at Lonely or whatever staging areas there is going to be
23 because that's going to be the place from which a lot of
24 activity will radiate.

25 To help you in your efforts to protect some of the

1 known surface values up there, I would urge you, like you've
2 done with subsistence and with caribou and waterfowl, to
3 convene a scientists' symposium. And I have two names just off
4 the top of my head of people who would probably be happy to
5 help with that. These would be people to -- in the field of
6 wilderness management who have ideas on what wilderness is and
7 what it takes to be a wilderness area. One of them is Roger
8 Kay, another one is Roger Siglin. And there are others up at
9 UAF and elsewhere.

10 In coming up with protection measures in your
11 mitigating stipulations, there's been no discussion -- or I
12 shouldn't say no, but there's not been an adequate discussion
13 of ways to protect the feel of the place. And this is what
14 Jon Miller just described in his comments. And this gets back
15 to the problem of scope. Wilderness was not considered in this
16 document. And wilderness is a feel, it's a feeling. And when
17 you want to -- if you really want to protect those values, we
18 need to do that.

19 And one of the ways -- let me say, too, that I
20 appreciate the agency's attempt at mitigating for those and
21 actually trying to grapple with what, you know, how big of an
22 area is impacted by a single oil field. I think that's a good
23 start. They use 8,000 acres, which is approximately 12 square
24 miles or 3 x 4 miles that a production facility would impact
25 one's sense of solitude. Three -- 12 -- I'm sorry. Twelve

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2 saying, you can see these things for days. I was on the upper
3 Colville delta, and I saw black smoke -- or at least some black
4 smoke coming out of one of the pads at Kuparuk. We were
5 somewhere in hell and gone way -- away on the Colville, and we
6 could hear the seismic vehicles. We couldn't see them, but we
7 could hear them. They were somewhere off to the north. So
8 again, when you're -- when -- if you're going to protect the
9 feel of the place, we need to broaden that area. How am I
10 doing on time?

11 MS. FOX: Well, you're over.

12 MR. VAN DEN BERG: Okay. Well, then I can wrap up.
13 I'm going to submit some written comments.

14 MS. FOX: Great.

15 MR. VAN DEN BERG: And thank you very much for the
16 opportunity to testify.

17 MS. FOX: Thank you. Next I have Roger Siglin.

18 MR. SIGLIN: Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
19 My name is Roger Siglin. And since my comments are short, I'd
20 like to inject a note of irrelevance in this very serious
21 meeting. Regarding the financial crisis in Asia, I saw a
22 recent comment, countries are like individuals; if you give
23 them a lot of money, they will hate you. And I think that
24 sentiment certainly applies to the average Alaskan's in view of
25 the federal government and to a lesser extent, the oil

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And any claims of doing this for the good of just a smoke screen.

Surprises and disappoints me is the support from people who I think should know better. In politicians who need industry's dollars to it's not surprising, I guess. But the vast should be concerned with leaving our children open options for the future in a world rich in es of all kinds. Let's let them decide which is wild lands or a few days more of oil and gas. I action alternative.

tu.

Thank you, Mr. Siglin. Next is Mike Taylor.

Taylor: Good evening. I'm Mike Taylor. I live es, and I'm representing myself. I appreciate that's given the public to have a say in how es are managed. And I also appreciate the ent here and learn the variety -- from the es that I've already heard presented and I'm sure e yet -- that are yet to be heard.

I come down somewhere in the middle on this long been a supporter of the environmental tive on issues from time to time that I was and I worked for several years for the National and at that time worked on the other side of

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1 this issue as we considered how Park Service land should be
2 managed. But for the last four years I worked for an oil
3 company in Prudhoe Bay. I've not yet been in the NPR-A. And I
4 hope to visit it sometime because I'm aware that there are some
5 very special wildlife and wilderness resources there that
6 deserve the greatest care if oil development is allowed in the
7 area.

8 Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River system clearly
9 are especially vital. As I look at the maps that summarize the
10 alternatives, I believe perhaps Alternative B might be a
11 reasonable and cautious first step. I'd be very hesitant to go
12 beyond that. However, even within Alternative B, it's
13 important to identify critical habitat areas that deserve very
14 special attention. With the modern extended reach drilling
15 methods that are now being used, Niakuk (ph) Field is a good
16 example, we can now reach oil resources from two to even five
17 miles away. So it is possible to put large areas within a
18 leased area off limits to development -- I mean to surface
19 development while still reaching some of the oil resources that
20 are underneath. And it's important to identify those areas and
21 limit the surface development where it's really critical. And
22 that may be a step that we can do to reduce impacts within the
23 developed area, if development occurs. Also, the development
24 companies and the North Slope Borough need to assure the most
25 careful controls are in place to protect wildlife resources,

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1 wildlife populations. Of course, limiting the sizes of pads is
2 real important because that limits the amount of tundra that is
3 impacted directly. But also controls on things like how
4 garbage is handled are real important. At Prudhoe Bay we have
5 a problem with wildlife getting into dumpsters, and as a
6 result, we have higher populations of foxes and ravens and
7 gulls that prey on nesting birds. And I think that that's
8 something that the Borough particularly which operates the
9 dumpster system needs to do a better job of finding ways to
10 keep wildlife out of garbage. So little things like that can
11 have a -- can be real important in protecting the wildlife
12 resources in a developed area.

13 Now, in my view, with careful thought and controls
14 important wildlife resources can be maintained with development
15 -- with reasonable development of oil resources in the area.

16 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. Next is
17 Cathy Merritt.

18 MS. MERRITT: My name's Cathy Merritt. I'm
19 representing myself. I live in Fairbanks. And as you can see,
20 I have no notes, so this will be quick. I'm not going to get
21 into the details like so many people have already done much
22 more eloquently, I'm sure, than I could. But I'd like to say
23 that I support Alternative A, the no development option. And
24 mostly I want to focus on what I see as the big picture. And
25 that's that -- I should breathe, it helps. That is, I don't

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1 understand why we're putting so much effort into expanding oil
2 development when we've put very little effort as a nation into
3 energy efficiency and alternate resources. I'd like to see
4 perhaps even half the effort that's going toward development go
5 towards energy efficiency and alternate resources. I feel like
6 we as a country are just hemorrhaging and we keep calling for
7 more blood, more oil, and we're doing nothing to stop the
8 hemorrhage. And so I think I'd like to see America look
9 towards energy efficiency rather than potentially destroying
10 the last great wilderness that we have.

11 That's all I have to say.

12 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Merritt. Joseph Rueter.

13 MR. RUETER: Hello. My name's Joseph Rueter and I'm a
14 resident of Fairbanks here. My address is P.O. Box 83585. I'
15 an environmental scientist in town here. I haven't had the
16 chance to actually visit this area like some of my friends
17 have. But a pertinent thing here is -- it may not sound
18 pertinent to begin with, but my wife's pregnant. I've got a
19 kid that's on the way, going to be born in May. And I'd really
20 like to see that that child could see the same area that my
21 friends have seen up there. I visited other areas in the
22 Arctic, the Gates of the Arctic. I've worked up on the Slope.
23 Specifically, I was working on the Slope removing work camps
24 from the original -- the construction of the original pipeline.
25 So I'm familiar with what's left over after oil development in

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1 the Arctic. So I basically have three points here.

2 The Naval Petroleum Reserve was established to be a
3 reserve for our country to be developed only in a time of
4 pressing national need. And I feel we're not -- I personally
5 feel we're not in such a pressing emergency right now to have
6 to develop this area. And I don't -- I feel we're not in the
7 middle of an emergency, considering we've got lower efficiency
8 in our automobiles right now. It doesn't sound like an
9 emergency to me. There's a good probability that the product
10 that would be developed from this area may be shipped overseas.
11 That's what we're seeing with the oil that's coming off the
12 North Slope right now. And something else we're seeing is that
13 our -- actually our fuel prices are going down right now. That
14 doesn't sound like an emergency to me. It doesn't sound like a
15 pressing need for us to go in and do this.

16 But I stopped by BLM the other day and picked up a copy
17 of the Draft EIS and read it over, and I can see that there's
18 been a lot of effort gone into looking into this area. I've
19 been out of the country the last three years working in
20 Guatemala. I'm a long-term Alaskan. I've been here since the
21 '80s. So I'm walking into this kind of from a clean slate.
22 And I just dropped by, picked up a copy of the Draft and read
23 it over. And obviously there's a lot of work gone into this.
24 And I don't think we should throw it away. I mean it's really
25 -- it's been identified that there's some very, very

1 significant areas within the area that's being talked about
2 being developed, specifically the Teshekpuk Lake area and the
3 Colville River. And we shouldn't throw all this work out.
4 It's obviously a significant area. And I'd like to -- I feel
5 that these areas be recommended to Congress to be given
6 permanent wilderness protection. It means no development in
7 that area. And I think the management should be transferred to
8 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, specifically the
9 Teshekpuk Lake area because of its significance to waterfowl.

10 So in conclusion, I'd like to recommend that we protect
11 all of the area in question. In other words, I support Option
12 A. But in addition, I'd like to make -- I'd like to say we
13 should make addition to all the research that we've put into
14 looking at this area and permanently protect the irreplaceable
15 wilderness and wildlife that's been identified.

16 Thanks for listening.

17 MS. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Rueter. I have one more
18 request, so I would like to encourage any one else who would
19 like to speak tonight to go back to the table and fill out one
20 of these forms and we will take you after Karen Brewster.

21 MS. BREWSTER: My name is Karen Brewster and I live
22 here in Fairbanks. I don't have any written comments. I might
23 submit some later. This is off the top of my head. I haven't
24 even looked at the EIS until right now. I just moved to
25 Fairbanks this fall from Barrow where I was the Oral Historian

1 for the North Slope Borough for the last seven years. And my
2 concern in this area has a lot to do with the people of the
3 North Slope and their subsistence and cultural uses of the area
4 and I don't think those have been considered fully enough. In
5 the little bit I've looked at the EIS, the subsistence use
6 areas are very important to the people there. They've been
7 using them for generations. And cultural historic sites
8 indicated on your maps are ones that are -- have physical
9 remains and there are many, many, many more sites that people
10 have been using that are their camping sites, their hunting
11 sites, and don't necessarily have archaeological or physical
12 remains and I think those need to be taken into account.

13 I was glad to see the inclusion of the Ikpiuk River
14 corridor as a possible special use area, that and the Colville
15 and Teshekpuk are the main areas. I'm also concerned about the
16 caribou and waterfowl resource areas, that those get protected.
17 And in this whole process, I stated this a year ago in Barrow,
18 that I think there needs to be more work done with documenting
19 the cultural and historic uses of the area. It does say in the
20 EIS and I strongly agree with it that a lot of the area has not
21 been looked at, has not been documented, so there are blanks on
22 the map and that does not mean that they weren't used. It's
23 just research hasn't been done in that area. And I encourage
24 that that be done more. And that means talking to the elders
25 on the North Slope.

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1 Thank you.

2 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Next is
3 Kerynn Fisher.

4 MS. FISHER: Thank you for giving us this opportunity
5 to testify tonight. My name's Kerynn Fisher and although I'm
6 staff for the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, I'm
7 representing myself tonight. There have been a lot of issues
8 raised tonight that I think point to, you know, a careful
9 evaluation of drilling in the NPR-A. And people have talked
10 about the wilderness values, of the wildlife of the Teshekpuk
11 area and the Colville River; some from firsthand experience and
12 others from research and a genuine concern for wilderness and
13 wildlife. But there's two points that I'd like to raise, and
14 ask that BLM give them special consideration.

15 One of them is we don't need the oil. Jose just raised
16 that point and Cathy did also that with the oil prices
17 dropping, we're exporting the oil to Asia. We're now
18 encouraging fuel efficiency in our cars. What's to say that if
19 we have this reserve and we drill in it, that we're just not
20 going to waste the oil? What good is it going to do us if we
21 drill there now?

22 The second thing is I think it's best for Alaska to
23 hold off on it, too. We get a lot of benefit from the oil
24 industry in terms of funding our schools and public works. And
25 we'll do better if the price of oil is higher. We have all the

1 land in the Central Arctic to develop, and they are developing
2 it. They're expecting more to come out in the next five years
3 and for production to actually increase. So I'd recommend
4 making the most of the areas that are already developed before
5 we go into these untapped pristine areas.

6 My second point is that we haven't looked at the
7 cumulative effects of the existing development. There is
8 something like two million acres that have been leased in the
9 Central Arctic, but we haven't really taken a really thorough
10 look at what's happening to the caribou populations, global
11 warming, the tundra, you know, warming up the permafrost,
12 there's all sorts of things that we really need to look at
13 before we expand into the federal lands. So those are
14 basically my two points.

15 Thanks for taking public comment tonight.

16 MS. FOX: Thank you, Ms. Fisher. Is there anyone else
17 who intends to speak tonight? Okay. Well, I'd like to thank
18 the audience for being so considerate of the speakers and
19 allowing us to focus our attention on what they had to say and
20 say that this concludes the formal hearing on the NPR-A EIS and
21 the ANILCA Section 810 Findings.

22 I'd like to thank you all for coming and encourage you
23 to supplement the oral comments with written comments and send
24 them to the addresses on the information sheets on the table in
25 the rear of the room.

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Thank you.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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